

REMARKS

In the September 4, 2003 Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 7-10, 15, 27 and 30 and objected to claims 5, 6, 11-14, 28, 29, 31 and 32. Upon entry of the foregoing amendments, Applicants have canceled claims 3-5 and 28, without prejudice or disclaimer, and have amended claims 1, 6, 7, 9, 27, 29 and 31. After entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1, 2, 6-15, 27, and 29-32 (2 independent claims; 17 total claims) remain pending in this application. Support for the amended claims and the new claims may be found in the originally filed specification, and thus, no new matter is added by this amendment. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Examiner indicated that claims 5, 6, 11-14, 28, 29, 31, and 32 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. To this end, independent claim 1 has been amended to include all of the features of claim 5 and all of the features of intervening claims 3 and 4. Similarly, independent claim 27 has been amended to include all of the features of claim 28. The dependency of the various dependent claims 6, 7, 9, 29, and 31 have been amended for consistency. Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 27 and dependent claims 2, 6-5, and 29-32 are allowable.

CONCLUSION


In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the pending claims fully comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112 and are allowable over the prior art of record.

Reconsideration of the application and allowance of all pending claims is earnestly solicited.

Should the Office wish to discuss any of the above in greater detail or deem that further amendments should be made to improve the form of the claims, then the Office is invited to telephone the undersigned at the Office's convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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